

Socialist Worker

No Privatisation

Stop the sell off of our forests!

THE Fine Gael-Labour government want to sell off our forests. They will do so unless there is huge public pressure to stop them.

Sunday 9 June has been named as a day of national action where thousands will walk in the forests to show our opposition to privatisation.

After Bertie Ahern stepped down as Taoiseach, he sought positions in the corporate world.

But few know that he emerged as the chairperson of the International Forestry Fund – a joint venture between a Swiss financial company Helvetia Wealth and IFS, a Dublin based forestry assets management company.

If the forests are put up for sale, this disgraced Taoiseach, who presided over reckless bank activity, could be the big winner.

Coillte

Coillte, the forestry company, is valued at €1.2 billion. It has recorded profits in the last trading year of €256 million.

The right-wing economist, Colm McCarthy who was put in charge of a commission on the sale of state assets, recommended that Ireland follow the New Zealand model and sell-off the harvesting rights to the trees on long term leases.

To make the sell-off more attractive, he also suggested that the legal requirement to re-forest be removed as it was 'unjustified and counter-productive'.

The government agrees with this and is preparing to sell off harvesting rights for a 50-80 year duration.

Coillte is composed of three divisions: Forests, Panel Products and Enterprise, which develop business opportunities in areas like wind energy.

It is an integrated network so that wood flows at constant prices to the panel products divisions.

The panel board mills and saw-mills employ 1,800 and pay wages and salaries amounting to €90 million a year.

A private for profit company would be under no obligation to supply this division and certainly not at non-market prices.

Similarly, there would be no nec-



Actors Dermot Mulroney and Sinead Cusack at the first Walk in the Woods in Avondale

essary link between tree cutting and the creation of wind farms in a privatised firm.

However, the issue of forestry goes much deeper than simply economics.

Coillte controls 7 percent of the land mass of Ireland and operates an open access policy.

By contrast, private forests normally engage in more clear-felling and tend to deny access.

Ireland has no tradition of rights of way over public land.

So the 18 million forest visits that occur each year would be in danger.

Even if the government insisted on a right of way condition as part of the sell off, it would be hard to stop private owners closing off access to some forests.

The McCarthy proposal to remove a legal obligation to re-forest is particularly ominous as forests are also a vital resource for carbon sequestration.

Trees can absorb high levels of carbon and, therefore a requirement to reforest and extend the amount of land under cultivation is vital.

All of these factors explain why the scale of what is being attempted in Ireland is so unusual.

In almost all countries, the state is the largest forestry owner.

Even in New Zealand – which the McCarthy commission held up as a model – the state remains the largest owner because the privatisation only affected non-indigenous forest plantations.

Only Chile under Pinochet and, more latterly, South Africa has pursued extensive forest privatisation.

In the former case it led to considerable under-investment and many environmental problems.

In Britain, plans to privatise the public forest estate were dropped after a huge outcry.

More than 4000 people turned up to Avondale for the first Walk in the Woods and now we need to sustain the momentum.

Join the protests in your local area and make sure our forests remain in public ownership.

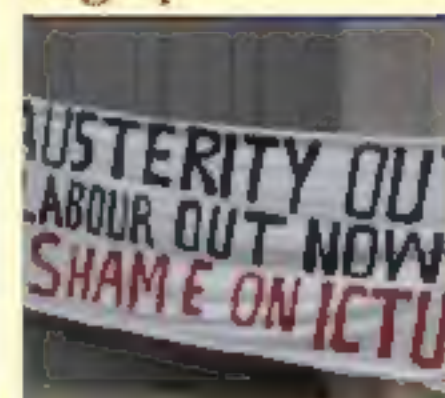
See Inside:

Page 3:



Ireland's murky tax laws

Page 4:



No – means No for Croke Park 2

Page 5:



Monsanto an agri-giant without a conscience

Below is a list of some of the walks already planned for 9 June

Dublin: Tincob, 1pm Contact Sara 087-6624821
 Wicklow: Glen of the Downs- 1pm Contact Sharon 086-3817966
 Wexford: Raven Woods Curracloe 1pm- Contact Noreen 087-7862970
 Portlaoise: Stradbally Woods 1pm Contact 086-8554318
 West Clare: Kilrush 6pm- Contact Karen on 086-1688090
 Kildare: Donadee forest 2pm Contact Jen 086-8492413
 West Cork: Lough Hyne 3pm- contact 086-2712323
 Dundalk: Slieve Foye Wood, Carlingford, Co. Louth 2pm <https://www.facebook.com/events/362505850516021/>
 Cork: Corabinn Woods 1pm- contact Jim 086-3556482
 Milltown Wood Lurganboy Co Leitrim phone 0860529873 for more details.

Bus to Fermanagh from Dublin 1.30pm on Monday 17 June from Liberty Hall

Government fails women again

By MADEIRA MONTANSSON

THE heads of bill of the new abortion legislation published by the Government is a pathetic attempt to deal with the X-case ruling from 1992.

Pro-choice campaigners have fought for 20 years to get consecutive Irish governments to legislate, and it took the death of Savita Halappanavar for them to start the process. Following the massive demonstrations during the autumn the expert group report was published and work began on legislation. Unfortunately the worst fears of the movement for choice are now being realised.

A 14 year jail term

One of the most disgusting parts of the new legislation is the inclusion of a 14 year jail term for anyone who performs an illegal abortion in Ireland, or any woman who procures an abortion.

This effectively means that if a woman is raped and takes the abortion pill, she could get a higher jail sentence than her rapist. This includes women who for various reasons are not able to travel (migrant women, poor or very ill women) and who order the abortion pill online.

This rotten clause is partly designed to placate the right.

The Anti-Choice brigade and their US donors

Since January, the anti-choice groups have made a strong effort to mobilise and with their huge levels of money (from the US) and resources they have managed to mobilize thousands on the streets.

They present themselves as the majority, even though we know from several opinion polls that the majority of people in Ireland are in favour of more liberal abortion laws.

Restrictive anti-women legislation is not very surprising coming from Fine Gael, but it's disgraceful that the Labour Party who voted down Clare Daly's bill for 'not being radical enough' are supporting this legislation.

It's clear that Labour care more about staying in government than women's rights.

Suicide

Many women report unplanned pregnancy as a factor in the deterioration of their mental health with some becoming suicidal at the thoughts of carrying an unwanted fetus to term.

Despite this, there has been a mass campaign to restrict abortion from this cohort of women and from those who carry fetuses with fatal abnormalities.

Both of these sops are to keep the backward FG TD's (mainly middle aged men) on board and it shows the real priorities of Labour in government.

In their own words

LAST Saturday saw a number of resistance events organised against austerity. In Liberty Hall the No Means No campaign met to discuss strategy and tactics to defeat the Croke Park 2 proposals.

In Dublin city centre the CAHW campaign had a cavalcade and a lively protest against the household and water taxes.

Just prior to this around 400 activists met to protest against the giant Agri-corporation Monsanto's near monopolisation of the biotechnology in plants and foodstuffs. Socialist Worker was at each of the events and captured the sentiments of the participants.

Alan Laws from SIPTU Grassroots was one of the key speakers at the Anti-Croke Park Rally and he told SW that his main concern was "with the lack of representation being provided by ICTU."

"Almost every section of SIPTU recommended a vote and even though they lost, they still crawled back to the government looking to eat workers' pay. ICTU has become a cage to hold workers."



Keep up the street presence

We have to keep fighting, in particular to remove the criminalization of abortion from the new legislation.

The Pro-choice movement needs to remember that we are the majority, but not be complacent in the face of the right-wings' abilities to mobilize.

IN THE SHORT TERM WE NEED TO:

- Organise on the streets to de-criminalise abortion
- Bring large numbers of people into a democratic campaign

It can be unsafe to take abortion pills bought on the net. For a safe service go to www.womenonweb.org for full support from healthcare professionals to women in need

AND IN THE LONG TERM:

- Repeal the 8th Amendment
- Organise around the demand for free, safe and legal abortion

"They conspire to weaken their members and I would ask all of your readers and anyone else to pause before they vote and think about the effects of a yes on the weakest members in their unions."

"This is the real spirit of trade unionism and we must get back to this. "Thankfully there were members from CPSU, Unite, TUI, ASTI, INTO all attending here today. John Kild from the Irish Fire-Fighters And Emergency Services Association was also present and we need to capitalise on this broad base going forward."

Stephen Horman from the CAHW in Drinagh spoke to SW about why he attended the protest against the property tax -

"I came here today because I think it is very important to let the government and the people of Dublin know that we are still fighting and that we won't be going away."

Declan Doyle from Wicklow echoed these sentiments stating "we will keep fighting until the people who caused the crisis actually pay for it."

Kevin Walsh came all the way from Athlone and argued that we need to support "all those people who feel terrorised in their own homes. I myself am too young to own a house but I want to fight and I want everyone else to see that the fight is continuing."

Finally we spoke to Deirdre Wadding who had been at

the Monsanto protest before joining up with the CAHW demonstration:

"Whether it is the local capitalists bailing out the bondholders or the international capitalists grabbing control of our natural environment the system we live under is out of control."

"Through its actions Monsanto holds the lives of millions of people within its hands and instead of using its technology to save lives it uses it to enrich local communities and to profit from their misery."

"This has simply got to end and I'm proud to be fighting the effects of the system whenever it threatens the lives of ordinary people."

Actions of Minister for (In)justice reveal murky nature of Irish capitalism



By MEGAN NIC CRAITH

IN the course of a Primetime interview, Minister for Justice, Alan Shatter made it publicly known that Mick Wallace was spoken to by members of An Garda Síochána for using his mobile phone whilst driving.

No points, charges or warnings were issued as a result of this incident.

Minister Shatter claims that this was relevant since the scandal of quashing penalty points was being discussed on the program.

Yet he failed to mention that he himself was stopped and (almost) breathalysed by Gardai. Both Labour and Fine Gael have made it clear that they will defend the Minister in the face of Fianna Fáil's motion of No Confidence.

Separation of Powers

Both the Data Protection Commissioner and the Standards in Public Office Commission are investigating Shatter's actions.

This is because in a capitalist democracy there are supposedly Chinese walls between those that make the laws and those that enforce them.

This clear separation is supposed to prevent corruption and clear abuses of power, but in reality an informal back-channel is always available to the elites.

It is disturbing enough that the police commissioner is giving out personal information on opponents of the government.

What makes it even worse is that in February 2010, Shatter successfully called for the resignation of the then Minister of Defence Willie O'Dea, as he "publicly discussed, for his own electoral gain, confidential information furnished to him by

a member of An Garda Síochána" about a political opponent.

This hypocrisy is inherent in the regime under which Shatter operates. When a government opponent is in the firing line personal information is bandied about without any problems.

However when it comes to the individual information of a corporate giant, the government suddenly invokes the separation of powers.

Rotten Apple

Despite protests from Eamon Gilmore that Ireland has a "very transparent" tax system, the fact remains that Apple CEO Tim Cook stated before the US Senate that his company was privy to a deal which enabled them to pay only 2% tax - in response to which Senators labelled this country a "tax haven."

Germany and France expect their corporations to pay 29.5 and 33.3% respectively.

Yet when it comes to the specifics of the Apple situation the government suddenly becomes coy.

When asked about Apple's arrangements neither Kenny nor Noonan will be drawn on details.

Instead they issue carefully worded generalisations and denials before arguing that it would be highly improper to discuss the merits of individual cases.

When Shatter abused his position the matter was deemed trivial.

But when corporations are in the firing line it becomes essential that we respect the rules of anonymity. Hypocrisy is too kind a word for this lot.

It is not even a case of one rule for the general public, and another for the financial elites; but one rule for the public, and none for those who frequent the corridors of power.

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WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet.

A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan the production and distribution for human need and not profit.

REVOLUTION

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy.

To destroy capitalism, we need to overthrow the present state structures and create a workers' state based on equal

greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR
War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the world.

The "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance.

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This includes and extends to

working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITS IN THE NORTH

We stand for workers' unity against the Assembly politicians and Cameron government.

Like good socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a carnival of reaction.

We want to see an Irish workers' republic where all

workers rule.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To win socialism workers need to organise in a revolutionary party.

This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system.

We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.

We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action

Join the Socialists

Fill in the form and send to
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What Socialists Say



Divided we fall

Last week two stories emerged that on first glance seem to have nothing in common.

On Tuesday, members of the US Senate accused Apple of tax avoidance measures facilitated in large part by a special deal with the Irish tax authorities (the Double Irish).

On Thursday, Kieran Mulvey revealed that the Labour Relations Commission had succeeded in tweaking the Croke Park 2 agreement sufficiently to warrant a second ballot.

This, of course, was government spin. But the real story is the way that elite groups sow divisions within their opponent's ranks to get what they are looking for. In the case of the global economy the obvious solution to tax avoidance would be a corporate-profit rate that would apply uniformly.

In this case no corporation could play one government off against the next in order to make them compete for investment.

Standing united, the states of the world could face down every corporation, but they allow themselves to be divided before arguing with citizens that they must be individually competitive.

In this way a conservative logic emerges as every citizen is encouraged to support their own elites in attracting investment.

This then gives oxygen to those who call for lower corporation taxes, tax loopholes and generous grants and subsidies for the bosses.

Trade unions have traditionally been very critical of this phenomenon, but ICTU has now colluded with the Irish government to establish the very same dynamic. Instead of standing united in their calls for a solution to the crisis based on progressive taxation, each union went into talks on the basis that the cuts were inevitable.

Even after more than 65% had voted against CP2 this set up a conservative dynamic as each executive panders to the idea they must work to protect their own members individually. Like the corporations this allows government to get its way with only superficial changes.

Globally, the ugly truth is that governments actively collude with corporations to hide their profits and avoid what they owe.

Tragically, we are now seeing the very same collusion from union leaders who are supposed to work for the good of their members.

Luckily we can still defeat this rotten deal by voting No - but even if we lose Begg and O'Connor will have to go.

Media frenzy around Jolie is revolting

THE celebrity furor that has surrounded the news of Angelina Jolie's double mastectomy is truly revolting.

In an opinion piece in the New York Times, Jolie explained she had undergone the mastectomy having tested positive for a faulty BRCA1 gene, which dramatically increases the risks of breast and ovarian cancer.

Jolie uncovered this risk through a private examination that costs upwards of \$3000 and the actress was anxious to make "it a priority to ensure that more women can access gene testing and lifesaving preventive treatment, whatever their means and background, wherever they live".

If the US government were to adopt the test as part of its medi-care package it could be given for free. Instead a private company, Myriad Genetic, have captured the rights to test for the faulty genes, denying the examination to anyone who cannot pay.

This monopolisation by a private company of parts of the human genome should be the real story, but instead a sexist and profit hungry media fawns over the sexuality of a Hollywood celebrity.

The fact that millions of women are needlessly at risk is completely whitewashed by a media that commodifies women as a matter of course.

Capitalism has always imperialised the human and natural environment, but granting intellectual property rights in bio material (genes, plants etc) sets a dangerous new precedent. Instead of privatising medicine we need to re-organise science so that its purpose is to benefit people not profit.

To her credit, Jolie has highlighted a huge issue that many women face. We need to go further and deal with the causes that prevent women having full access to diagnostic tests which save lives.

Analysis

Apple scandal – how tax scams are ripping us off



Rotten Apple - Apple CEO Tim Cook in front of the US Senate Committee on charges of tax avoidance

By KIERAN ALLEN

A special committee of the US Senate investigating corporate tax breaks has uncovered a vast tax scam operating from Ireland.

Apple Operations International had an income of €30 billion, but only paid a tax rate of 0.05 percent.

A second Apple company, Apple Sales International, had control of intellectual property outside the US.

It received \$74 billion in sales income over four years but paid less than 2 percent in tax.

The Apple CEO, Tim Cook, told the US hearing that Apple had a 'special deal' with the Irish government, a claim that they subsequently denied.

Ireland was also branded as a 'tax haven' in a special report issued by the Senate.

This puts massive pressure on the Irish elites, with Labour Foreign Minister, Eamon Gilmore, forced to publicly claim Ireland is fully compliant with OECD guidelines.

What he didn't say was that these guidelines are so vague that nearly every country can sign up to them.

Corporate Lobbying

In 1989, the OECD issued a report on Harmful Tax Competition.

But after a massive lobbying campaign by US corporate interests its recommendations were watered down.

Countries only had to make 'transparency agreements' and provide information, if requested.

Those who did not were to be put on an OECD 'blacklist'.

But almost all countries signed up, including even the Cayman Islands!

Ireland operates as a tax haven by deliberately writing its law to create loopholes for US companies who want to dodge tax.

The evidence for this is overwhelm-

ing. Other companies, besides Apple, such as Google, Starbucks, and General Electric all pay tax rates of less than 2%.

GE Capital Aviation Funding, the Shannon based aircraft leasing finance company, for example recorded pre-tax profits of \$765 million in 2011.

Yet it had no employees and only paid \$379,000 in corporation profits tax to the Irish state.

It used Irish tax laws to claim 'group relief' and so paid only 0.5 percent tax on its profits.

Ireland's famous 12.5% rate of corporation tax is only a headline figure designed to appease global corporations.

The real dirty business is found in the loopholes that have especially been created.

Here are some of the ways it works.

■ Until recently, Ireland had no 'transfer

on intellectual property.

It has brought in special tax reliefs to allow companies like Apple and Google draw in billions in royalty fees, without paying tax.

■ Ireland has no 'Controlled Foreign Company' rules.

This enables a state to get profits sent by subsidiaries to their parent holding companies.

Billions can flow into Ireland – but no tax is taken.

■ Ireland allows the rich to take huge dividend payments out of Ireland tax free – provided they are going to another EU country.

■ Ireland allows companies to incorporate themselves here to get an EU base. But, as in the Apple case, it then accepts they are not 'tax resident'.

Ireland has a vast army of tax planners whose sole job is to allow the rich to avoid taxes.

These meet with the Revenue Commissioners on a regular basis to lobby for more loopholes.

There are over 80,000 people working in the areas of tax, consultancy and the legal specialities dealing with taxation.

These people make up the vast bulk of those 110,000 tax units earning over €100,000 and they put massive pressure on the government to keep the burden off the corporations.

The mass of the population end up subsidising the rich by paying more taxes and accepting lower standard public services.

We should demand a special Dáil inquiry into the myriad of tax scams that are being used to rob us.

There is no reason why the US Senate should know more about these operations than the Irish people.

But we should also stop falling for the argument that there is no wealth in Ireland – and that we, the workers, must make all the sacrifices.



No Means No – No to another Croke Park deal



by KIERAN ALLEN

A concerted attempt is underway by the government, the media and the ICTU leaders to bully workers into reversing their vote on Croke Park 2.

The ICTU leaders led by David Begg alongside SIPTU's Jack O' Connor and Patricia King are doing everything to help their friends in the Labour Party.

They need to get public sector workers to give another €1 billion to help pay off bondholders.

We should stand firm and say NO. We should go further and get rid of union leaders whose primary loyalty is to the Labour Party. They are undermining the very basis of trade unionism.

Here are some of the reasons why. **They do not listen to their own members.**

When workers voted No to Croke Park 2, the union leaders should have called a special conference to get a new mandate.

Instead, they took it on themselves to do another deal with their Labour Party comrade, Brendan Howlin, without any consultation with their members.

The government is tearing up an existing agreement that is supposed to last until 2014 - and the ICTU leaders are saying 'let them'. If they get away with this, they will do it again and again.

The Croke Park 2 agreement will not expire until June 2014 but the government wants to take more than even this rotten deal.

The ICTU leaders want us to agree to another €1 billion robbery from the pay and pensions of public sector workers.

Instead of telling the government to close loopholes that allowed Apple to pay a 0.05% tax rate on €30 billion profits of an Irish subsidiary, we are supposed to accept more job losses.

The Haddington Road proposals are designed to 'facilitate further reductions in staff numbers' so that the next budget 'can make appropriate provision for annual pay bill savings'.

30,000 public sector jobs have already been destroyed – and now they want more!

It will mean less public services and more stress for the remaining workers

who deliver them.

The union leaders are collaborating in draconian legislation introduced by their Labour Party friends.

The Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Bill 2013 gives the government power to reduce the pay of public servants and increase working hours.

It states 'that the working time, whether by reference to a day, a week or a month' (can be made) greater'.

In other words, the government is taking power to brush aside collective bargaining and determine our working hours at the stroke of a pen.

This power will stay on the statute books for a long time. It is a measure that would do any dictatorship proud.

If we had a half decent union leadership, they would refuse to negotiate any deal until the threat of this legislation was removed.

They would call mass protests to tell the government to back off.

Instead the Haddington Road proposals explicitly state that 'the parties note that a number of these measures will require legislative change'.

In other words, that the unions will collaborate with government Ministers who impose new conditions on workers, by law.

For this treachery alone – the leaders of SIPTU, the INTO and the ICTU must be removed.

What is in the Deal?

When governments lose referenda like Lisbon 1, they make us vote again and invoke bigger threats. Now the union leaders are trying the same trick.

There are no substantial changes in the latest Haddington Road proposals. It reads just like Croke Park 2 and exactly the same amount of savings are being extracted.

EXTRA HOURS

■ Everyone's hours of work are being increased.

Those under 35 hours go to 37. Those over 35, go to 39.

Management can deploy these extra hours any way they want and can 'aggregate' them on a daily, weekly or annual basis.

PAY FREEZE UNTIL 2016

■ If these proposals go through, workers will not get a pay rise for eight years – even though we have to put up with property taxes, Universal Social Charge, water charges. Plus inflation.

NEW ROSTERS TO CUT OUT OVERTIME PAYMENTS

The increased hours are bad enough – but they will be used as an excuse for ~~the government~~ to eliminate overtime payments. Workers will have to co-operate on these changes, which according to one insider will give the government the equivalent of an extra 2,000 full time posts free of charge.

FREE OVERTIME

■ Those who work 39 hours will give away an hour's free overtime a week

until March 2014.

CUTS IN INCREMENTS AND OVERTIME RATES

■ Those who earn over €35,000 – and that includes allowances – will see their overtime rates cut to time and a quarter. This 'new norm' will later be extended to everyone else. Other workers will have to give an extra six days work for free. Increments will also be cut.

MORE RE-DEPLOYMENT BEYOND 45 KILOMETRES AND MANAGEMENT BY STRESS

■ There will be more re-deployment because managements will get 'enhanced flexibility'. The 45 kilometres away norm can also be breached.

■ Workers will also be subject to more individual 'targets' and where these are not met, there will be disciplinary measures and 'exit mechanisms'.

Vote No and change the Unions

There is nothing in this deal for workers. The ICTU leaders can only use the tactic of 1) 'divide and rule' and 2) fear.

■ Instead of promoting solidarity between workers, they try to tell different groups they are 'looked after'. But we should reject this deal because an 'injury to one is an injury to all'.

■ They play the soft cop to the government's hard cop. If we don't accept, the ICTU leaders say there will be all-out strikes.

The union leaders have failed us miserably – and few have any confidence that they could lead any resistance.

They did nothing to fight pay cuts of 15%. They did nothing when the retirement age was increased to 68. All they do is spread defeatism.

If we reject this deal, we will have to take on the government. But before doing so, we will have to convene special union conferences to elect a new leadership that can lead a fight. Once we have a decent leadership, we can stand together and face down a bullying government.

Our tactics for doing so can be decided democratically after we have said: Enough is Enough.

O'CONNOR PLEADS IGNORANCE TO SIPTU SLUSH FUND



Alan Laws of SIPTU Grassroots spoke to Socialist Worker about the nature of a Health and Local Authority Levy Fund and the questions arising for the SIPTU leadership

What exactly was this fund?

AL – In 1998 a fund of around €100,000 was established by SIPTU to strengthen social partnership.

Between 2002 and 2011 around €4.15 million flowed through the so-called Health and Local Authority Levy Fund and according to the Comptroller and Auditor General report €588,000 of this went on 'travel and accommodation', €348,000 went on 'marketing', whilst €89,000 went on 'hospitality'.

Now, how vast sums of money that are meant to go on training could be spent on junkets and hospitality is beyond me, especially as €583,000 went to a mere 250 people connected to the SIPTU hierarchy.

How has Jack O' Connor responded to the obvious anomalies that the fund throws up?

AL – His response, quite frankly, has been appalling.

As part of the funds to strengthen partnership around €422,000 was transferred from SIPTU to other trade unions.

Despite this fact, and the massive torture surrounding the initial launch of the fund, O' Connor claims he wasn't aware of it.

This is simply astonishing. Indeed it either means O' Connor is completely incompetent as he presided over vast sums of his member's money leaving the union without his knowledge, or he is lying to avoid any responsibility for the ways the funds were appropriated.

Is there any significance of this for the current Croke Park 2 discussions?

AL – Absolutely. During the discussions held by SIPTU to ram through the last proposals, I saw numerous officials and even some shop stewards arguing against union member's who wanted to fight.

I find this simply incredible and I fear that some people have been bought off by the many junkets that came out of the slush fund.

If this is true then it helps to explain the levels of complicity within the hierarchy of SIPTU today and in-so-far as other union leaders partook in the fund they are also compromised.

Before any union member listens to anyone in a position of authority I would ask them to ask that member – have they ever gone on any trip paid for through that fund?

If the answer is yes you then know who you are dealing with and you should disregard their so-called advice.



Monsanto an agri-giant without a conscience



by DEIRDRE WADDING
(freelance socialist activist)

A protest against one of the world's biggest biotech companies was staged in Dublin on Saturday 25 May as part of a global campaign operating in 52 countries on all five continents.

Monsanto is one of the biggest promoters and purveyors of GM agriculture in the world.

It is also the company that brought us no less vile a creation than Agent Orange (a chemical agent used to devastating effect by the US military in Vietnam).

Due to its activities Monsanto has been at the centre of controversy and litigation for decades, but such is its power and influence, that it has won almost all of its cases with ease.

In 2011, Monsanto spent no less than

\$6.3 million on lobbying activities.

Almost 1/3 of that (\$2 million) was in regard to foreign agriculture biotechnology laws, regulations and trade.

During 2008 it gave \$186,250 to US federal election candidates and in 2010 that increased to \$305,749, the bulk of it to Republican candidates.

More ominously, Monsanto spent \$8.1million opposing Proposition 37 in California, which would have enforced disclosure of GM crops used in food products.

In November 2012, Proposition 37 was rejected by just over 53% of the vote.

The current Senior Advisor to the US Food and Drug Administration is a former Vice President of Monsanto for Public Policy.

Global dominance

Across the globe Monsanto has worked to colonise agri-business at the expense of small

farmers and ordinary workers.

Frequently farmers are sued if they attempt to use seeds that have recently been patented by Monsanto under intellectual property policies hatched by mandarins at the World Trade Organisation.

In India, Monsanto has used its influence to exclude indigenous competitors to the point where 87% of Indian cotton growing land is now being used for their biotech cotton.

In Argentina, GM soy production was approved in 1996 and such has been the impact that 50% of small farmers have now been displaced from the Chaco region.

Unfortunately this is only the tip of the iceberg.

The more one looks into Monsanto activities the more one finds a blatant disregard for human well being and this is why I felt I had to protest on Saturday in Dublin.

Shanganagh workers win



by KARL GILL

AFTER 3 days on strike the workers at SDD Shanganagh Water Treatment plant have had their demand to Labour Court conciliation met by management.

The plant was formerly a Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council operation treating water for domestic purposes for 248,000 people in South Dublin and Wicklow.

However, now it is run for profit by a joint venture between an Irish construction company and two Spanish companies.

A dispute initially broke out between the workers and the management about the sacking of Union shop

steward Darragh Kennedy for unionising the staff of the plant.

Following two conciliation meetings at the Labour Relations Commission this issue was thought to be resolved.

However some issues remained outstanding.

Workers concerns

The workers concerns with regards to pay and shift premium payments were ignored by management.

The workers also complained about various health and safety issues such as management's refusal to buy stab proof gloves following a worker getting a dirty needle prick in his hand, no gas masks

for contaminated areas and improper tools in the plant - but again these issues were ignored.

So the 14 workers voted unanimously for strike action.

They were on shift work so their picket was around the clock.

Plant worker, Jeff Jones, said: "None of us has ever been involved in an industrial dispute before.

We are working a 24-hour - 52 weeks a year, shift pattern, including public holidays, for a rate applied to day workers.

All we are seeking is fair pay for the hours and shifts that we work."

He went on to discuss the harsh nature of the job

and how at any moment the workers may be forced to travel to a neighbouring plant in Bray.

Victory

The strike lasted three days and rapidly became effective with delivery servicemen refusing to pass the picket and the local community being very supportive.

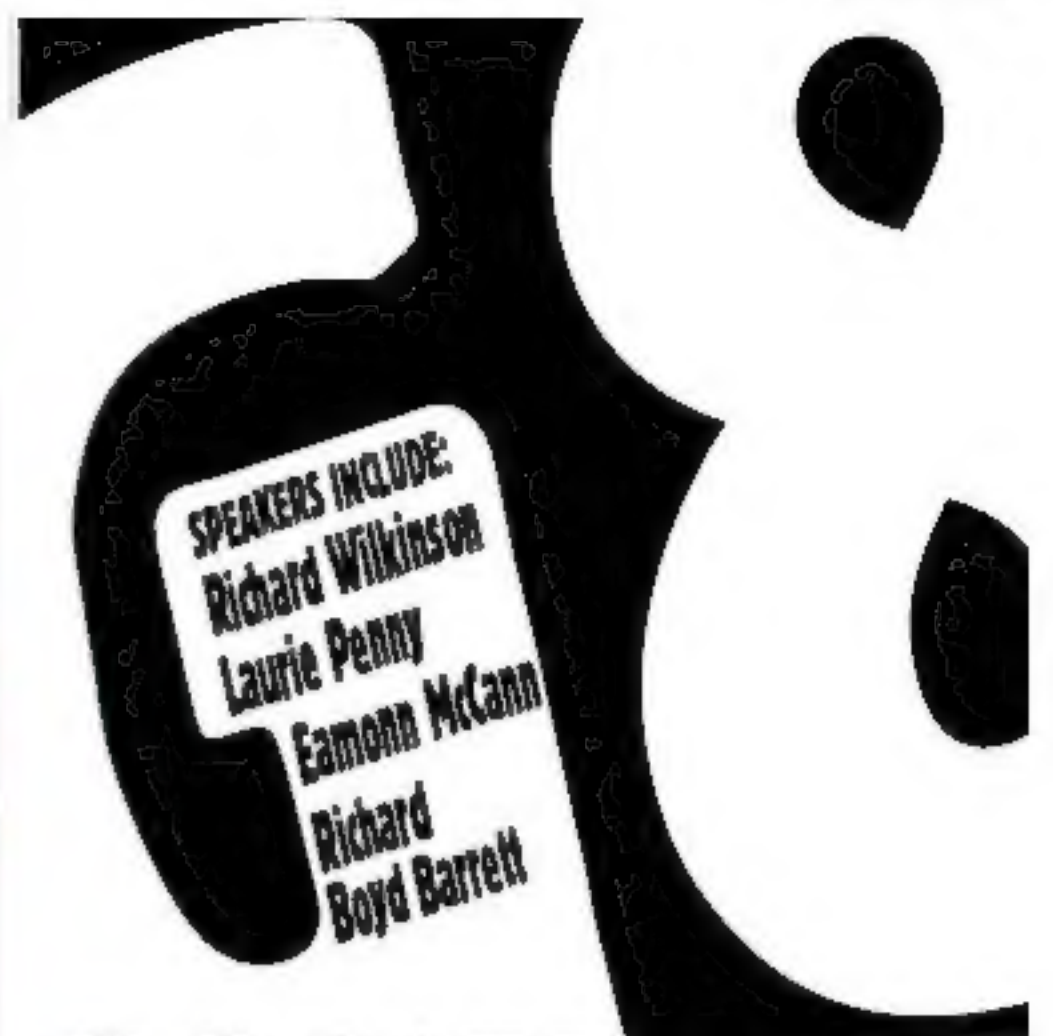
Meanwhile, the local shop provided free food for the workers.

Without vital goods being delivered to the plant and lab workers (whose job it is to test the level of contaminants in the water) refusing to pass the picket, it was only a matter of time before the workers won.

The management initially thought they could handle the plant without the expertise of the workers but after only 3 days the company accepted to refer the issues in dispute to the Labour Court, whilst the workers agreed to go back to work.

Employees at the plant in Shankill showed that workers power and solidarity is far more powerful than union busting and driving roughshod over workers rights.

Socialist Worker would like to offer its congratulations to the 14 men for fighting for what was rightfully theirs.



COUNTER SUMMIT

Sunday June 16th @ 10am

Ramada Encore Hotel • St Annes Sq

Book Your Ticket. Text "Ticket" to 07596114612

Protest Against the G8

The G8 are the leaders of the eight richest countries on earth - the USA, Germany, Britain, France, Japan, Canada, Italy, and Russia. This year the G8 summit will take place near Enniskillen on 16 and 17 June. They will gather to co-ordinate policies for defending privilege and inequality. The G8 and its associates represent the pillar organisations of corporate globalisation.

It will be a focus for protesters to gather and voice demands for global justice. So far, the ICTU is planning a march in Belfast on Saturday 15 June. A counter summit is being organised by G8 Alternatives on Sunday 16 June in Belfast. And a major protest is scheduled for Enniskillen on Monday 17 June.

There will also be public meetings around the country to help mobilise for the G8 protests. If you want to get involved contact 085 858 5292 (South) 075 96114612 (North)

G8-Counter Summit Sunday 16th June

Ramada Encore Hotel, St Annes Sq Belfast

Timetable [Tickets £10 waged/ £5 unwaged] Contact 075 9611 4612

10.00 - 11.00	Should G8 Run the World? Eamonn McCann (Journalist), John Holloway (Sociology lecturer & author of <i>Change the World Without Taking Power</i>)
11.00 - 12.00	Putin, Pussy Riot and the Right to Protest Laurie Penny (Blogger, <i>New Statesman</i> journalist)
12.00 - 1.00	Why Inequality Doesn't Work Richard Wilkinson (Author of <i>The Spirit Level</i>)
2.00 - 4.00	From Weapons of Mass Destruction to Disarmament The case against war Simon Aspin (Socialist Worker journalist) & others
4.00 - 6.00	Climate Change - How Can we Stop the World Burning? Jonathan Neale (Author of <i>Stop Global Warming, Change the World</i>) & others
6.00 - 7.00	Austerity in the Face of our Lives Richard Boyd Barrett TD, Conor McCabe (Irish Left Reviewer, author of <i>Sins of the Fathers</i>) & speakers from Greece & Spain

Five reasons why you should protest

1. The G8 pushes bail-outs for the banks - and austerity for us.
2. The G8 leaders include the world's greatest war-mongers.
3. The G8 leaders talk hypocritically about world hunger - but do nothing.
4. Our planet is in danger from global warming - but the G8 does little to tackle climate change.
5. The G8 leaders promote ever more attacks on civil liberties.

Opinion Piece on Woolwich Murder

Who are the real terrorists?

By JOHN MOLYNEUX

THE day after a British soldier was killed on the streets of Woolwich in London, President Obama delivered a speech defending the continued use of drone attacks in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The first event was blazoned over the front pages of the tabloid press in graphic images, accompanied by inflammatory headlines about 'terrorism' and 'savagery'. The second was reported as a reasoned defence of a just war.

However it takes only a moment's thought to realise that far, far more people, including civilians, women and children die from drone attacks – on a regular basis – than have ever been killed by 'terrorists' in the UK, let alone in this one incident.

Nor is having a drone or bomb land on your home or wedding party going to be any less 'savagery' or 'barbaric' in the appalling injuries it inflicts.

Moreover the ongoing threat of drone attacks or bombing raids will 'terrorise' communities and whole populations infinitely more than any individual attack on a soldier.

Yet drone attacks and bombing raids by Western forces are NEVER described in the media in terms of 'savagery' or 'terrorism'.

This media double standard fed a vicious backlash against the British Muslim community orchestrated by the racist and fascist English Defence League.

Mosques across the country were attacked, in some cases fire bombed, and assaults on individual Muslims have soared.

(Though it's important to note that this backlash has been vigorously resisted by Unite Against Fascism and other anti-racists see below). But none of these attacks on Muslims and mosques are described as 'terrorism'.

It is probably the case that neither the ruling class nor the bulk of its media actually want or support this violent backlash against all Muslims as they would fear turning tens of thousands of Muslims into militants.

So why do they maintain the blatant double-standard? Because they NEED to demonise Muslims and associate Islam, as such, with 'terrorism' in order to justify US and UK foreign policy and foreign wars, which in reality are not about terrorism but about maintaining Western imperialist control of oil supplies and strategic territories.

The ruling class try to deny this connection. London mayor, Boris Johnson, even made the absurd claim that there was no link between British foreign policy and the Woolwich killing.

Joe Glenton, a former soldier who went to jail as a war resister, answered this nonsense very clearly.

"So at the very outset, and before the rising tide of prejudice and pseudo-patriotism fully encloses us, let us be clear: while nothing can justify the savage killing in Woolwich... It should

not be hard to explain why the murder happened.

"It should by now be self-evident that by attacking Muslims overseas, you will occasionally spawn twisted and, as we saw yesterday, even murderous hatred at home.

"We need to recognise that, given the continued role our government has chosen to play in the US imperial project in the Middle East, we are lucky that these attacks are so few and far between."

Socialist Worker echoes these sentiments exactly.

We are far from defending the killing of soldiers on the streets of London, but we want an honest discussion that roots these attacks in the savagery of Western imperialist policy and understands the consequences for millions of ordinary Muslims of the portrayal of the killers as animals in the mainstream press.



The fascist EDL who are using the Woolwich murder to sow hatred and division



Graffiti on the mosque



The car bonnet

Activists stand up to racism after Woolwich attack

RACISTS have attacked two mosques in Bolton, north west England, since a soldier was killed in Woolwich, south east London, last Wednesday.

Racist graffiti was spray painted on the walls of one mosque while people attended morning prayers on Thursday. "Islam=evil" was also spray painted on the bonnet of one man's car and "terrorist inside" on the doors.

Another Bolton mosque had dog faeces dumped on its entrance on Thursday lunchtime.

Attacks on mosques in other areas, including Essex and in Kent, south east England, have also been reported.

The racist English Defence League (EDL) has called several demonstrations in the wake of the killing in Woolwich.

As Socialist worker went to press they were

planning a protest in Manchester and at Downing Street on Monday 27 May.

Unite Against Fascism is calling for activists to mobilise against the racists.

Billie, a young Muslim from Bolton, told Socialist Worker, "Whatever your race or religion everyone who wants to stop the fascists exploiting the situation must unite.

"When the EDL came to Bolton three years ago, we went out there with non-Muslims who have stood beside us day in and day out.

"We need to come together in solidarity again to ensure the forces of hatred do not prevail.

"We urge everyone to assemble in Manchester and London to make sure that the EDL does not bring hatred to our streets."

Guards fire on striking miners in South Africa

by KEN OLENDE

TEN striking chrome miners were hospitalised after rubber bullets were fired on Tuesday of last week at the Lanxess mine near Rustenberg in South Africa.



Miners in Marikana last year (AP/Reuters)

Security guards hit at least 15 of the 470 miners on an unofficial strike, saying they fired in self defence.

The miners have been on an unofficial strike since the previous Thursday.

The incident happened close to where police massacred 34 striking miners at Marikana last August, also claiming self defence.

Tensions are high in the mining sector after a two-day stoppage at the Lonmin mine where the Marikana strike began, following the murder of an AMCU union activist.

AMCU has replaced the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) as the dominant union in much of the mining sector. This is because it has been prepared to fight for increased wages, and lead unofficial strikes.

Territory

The NUM held a 1,000-strong political school last weekend. The speakers were keen to trash their rival union.

South African Communist Party general secretary Blade Nzimande, told the workers that AMCU is not a trade union, but a group of "vigilantes and liars".

NUM president Senzeni Zokwana said, "Instead of raising problems with employers, they just run to workers and instruct them not to go to work."

The NUM is aggressively trying to hang on to its territory in the mines, but also by raising demands for wage increases.

This month is traditionally the beginning of the annual wage negotiation round in South Africa.

Bosses say there is no money for wage rises. Amplats, the world's largest platinum producer made its first operating loss in South Africa in the last financial year.

Earlier in the year Amplats said it would have to lay off 14,000 workers. Now it says it will "only" have to sack 6,000.

Unions have greeted the new announcement with anger. Workers say they will down tools unless the company puts people before profits.

Elsewhere, around 1,600 workers joined a wildcat strike at Mercedes Benz which ended on Tuesday of this week.

The Numsa union, one of the more radical voices in the Cosatu union federation, is demanding a 20 percent pay increase.

Numsa national treasurer Mphumzi Magungu said, "If our demands are not met we will have no option but to go to the streets."

A three-week strike at the state owned bus company ended with a pay rise of 9.5 percent. Currently inflation is running at around 6 percent.

Bosses claim that they can't pay higher wages because they are not making enough profits.

They blame this on workers demanding higher wages.

'Retreat on Greek teachers' strikes is an outrage to trade union democracy'

Teachers' strikes could have beaten Greece's government but their trade union leaders threw the opportunity away, writes Panos Garganas



A teachers' meeting in Patras (Pic: Workers' Solidarity)

LEADERS of the teaching unions in Greece last week called off plans for a national strike of high school teachers.

This is an outrage to trade union democracy.

The government had threatened to sack teachers.

It had used conscription orders that meant they could be jailed for striking. Yet teachers had been prepared to defy the government and walk out anyway.

More than 20,000 high school teachers attended general assemblies of their local union branches on Tuesday 21 May.

They voted to strike during exams from Friday 24 May by 93 percent.

The government has tried to pit other workers against the teachers. But workers were prepared to take action with them.

Primary school teachers said they would strike with the high school teachers every day.

One of teachers' assemblies gave a standing ovation to a doctor who had been organising for solidarity strikes from the hospital unions.

The next day, the presidents of local union branches had to meet to ratify their decision.

They voted overwhelmingly in support of the original decision

to strike.

All of the political parties, except the Communist Party, felt they had to support this.

But then union leaders said that the conditions to successfully implement the decision to strike no longer existed. Yet none of the conditions had changed.

The trade union bureaucrats' said the teachers were "adventurist" for calling a strike during exams.

Opinion

They said a general strike would alienate public opinion.

All of the political parties now went along with this retreat, including the left wing Syriza. Its U-turn made all the difference.

Syriza had been part of the original strike call, along with the far left.

But its leader, Alexis Tsipiras, had been arguing for both the government and the unions to back down.

Syriza's parliamentary wing was desperate to avoid being blamed for a strike that could lose them votes—and its trade union wing obliged.

Workers' resistance to austerity means that the government is lagging behind on its target to cut 150,000 public sector jobs by 2015. That's one of the reasons it has stepped up attacks on teachers.

But it's also because resistance has been strongest from the best organised sections of workers, notably the teachers. The government had hoped to smash their confidence.

But teachers still take confidence from looking back to 1988.

Then they struck during exams and, even when the government took them to court, won many of their demands.

The teachers won support during that strike.

Now, with public opinion radicalised by three and a half years of fighting austerity, they can certainly win again.

There is a big debate among Syriza's rank and file following its U-turn.

And the far left is preparing for the teachers' union conference next month.

We are arguing for strikes as soon as school starts in September. That motion will probably pass.

But it's not enough to win the decisions—we also need the rank and file to be able to implement them when the bureaucracy won't.

The other lesson is political. We can't rely on the parliamentary wing of the movement. We need a stronger anti-capitalist left.

Panos Garganas is editor of Workers' Solidarity, Socialist Worker's sister paper in Greece

Dutch far right reaches out to Nazis

by TASH SIMFRIN



Wilders proudly tweeted a picture of himself with the fascist leader

GEERT Wilders, leader of the Dutch racist-populist Party for Freedom (PVV), is seeking an alliance with France's Front National (FN).

He wants to ensure "an enormous advance" for the far right at next year's European elections.

Wilders met FN president Marine Le Pen to discuss the plan in Paris last month. He also wants to draw in Belgium's Vlaams Belang and other

far right groups.

The PVV is viciously racist, particularly targeting Muslims and immigrants. But its lash-up with the FN breaks new ground. The FN is a fascist organisation, whose founder and honorary president Jean-Marie Le Pen—Marine's father—has described the Holocaust as a "mere detail" of history.

Wilders has previously distanced the PVV from fascist groups, including the FN and the English Defence League's street thugs. He has said, "We'll never join up with the fascists."

But after meeting Le Pen he declared, "We think the same about 90% of things, perhaps more. We also have a lot of points of agreement in terms of immigration."

Le Pen, who took a record 17.9 percent in last year's French presidential election, aims to hide the FN's fascism behind a slick public image. A tie-up with the populist PVV offers more mainstream credibility.

The far right across Europe is in a state of flux, producing new formations, shifting alliances and a cross-fertilisation of ideas, as racist and fascist parties try to build in the climate of austerity.

Wilders threatened, "Next year we can make an enormous advance." Anti-fascists and anti-racists across Europe should be on their guard.

International round-up



The Fiom union called the march (Pic: Fiom)

March in Italy against austerity

OVER 100,000 trade unionists and unemployed workers marched in Rome last Saturday to protest against the new coalition government's austerity measures.

It was called by the metalworkers' union Fiom.

The centre-left Democratic Party prime minister Enrico Letta promised to create jobs. But his coalition with Silvio Berlusconi's People of Freedom party and unelected technocrats looks set on cuts.

At 38 percent, unemployment for under 25s is the third highest in Europe.

Suicide bombs in the Iraqi capital

At least 200 people have been killed in suicide bomb attacks across Iraq's capital Baghdad in the last week.

This is the worst violence since December 2011, when US combat troops left.

Last month more than 700 died. Iraq is descending deeper into a bloody sectarian conflict in the wake of the destruction of the country's civilian infrastructure. This sowed the seeds for sectarian divisions.

Shortages in Venezuela

VENEZUELA has been hit by severe shortages of basic goods including milk, flour and toilet roll.

President Nicolas Maduro, who was vice president under Hugo Chavez, says big businesses have engineered

the crisis by under-producing food and whipping up panic buying.

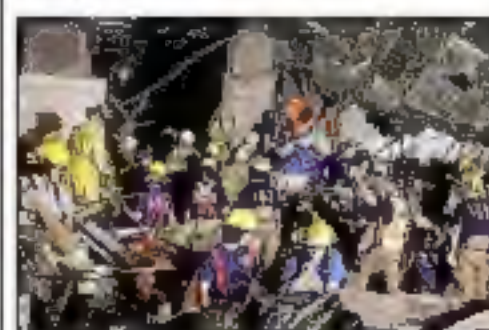
Maduro met Venezuela's biggest boss Lorenzo Mendoza hoping to reach an understanding last week.

His government also sent armed troops to run patrols and checkpoints in poor areas with high murder rates last week.

And it has approached the US about restoring diplomatic relations.

Oklahoma tornado hits poor hardest

THE tornado that ripped through parts of Oklahoma on Tuesday of last week left at least 50 people dead.



Homes in ruins (Pic: Oklahoma National Guard)

Those with no storm rooms or safe bunkers were most affected.

They were also least likely to have any means to escape after weather warnings told them what was expected.

Homes have been destroyed as well as a small hospital and a school where pupils and teachers tried to hide from the wind. Trailer parks and wooden homes were the worst affected with many people losing everything.

Socialist Worker

Corporations are the real benefit cheats

Come to Fermanagh to show your outrage at the G8 leaders who let them off the hook

AS the G8 approaches, we are told that "clamping down on tax avoidance" is high on the agenda for the Fermanagh meeting. DON'T believe the hype. David Cameron has no intention of doing anything about tax avoidance.

Last February, on a visit to Mumbai, he said he didn't think it was right to legislate on the issue. Far from doing anything to stop corporations avoiding huge tax bills, the Cameron government's public sector cuts have included slashing the numbers of workers in HMRC, the very people who are supposed to collect tax.

They have also cut the corporate-profit rate at the very time they ramp up our taxes.

None of this is remotely surprising, given that Cameron's own father had run a network of offshore investment funds in tax havens such as Panama City and Geneva which helped build his son's inheritance.

Oxfam

A recent report from Oxfam shows that people using tax havens are "depriving the world of more than £100 billion in lost revenue, enough money to end extreme poverty twice over".

Of the £12 trillion that Oxfam estimates is being held by individuals in tax havens around the globe, over a third – £4.7 trillion – is sitting in accounts in British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.

The Oxfam estimates are based on Bank for International Settlement data and so are less than the Tax Justice Network estimates of between £14 trillion and £21 trillion – however the two are consistent with each other.

As Oxfam says, these figures "put the UK at the centre of a global tax system that is a colossal betrayal of people here and in the poorest countries who are struggling to get by, and puts the government on the side of the privileged few...talking tough on tax, whilst continuing to usher a third of the world's wealth into UK tax havens".

It's worth noting that the £102 billion of lost tax revenue estimated by Oxfam is just a fraction of total tax loss, as it only reflects the amount of tax *individuals* are neglecting to pay and doesn't include the tax dodged by companies that costs poor countries more than £105 billion a year.

Between the tax dodged by super-rich individuals and that avoided by the corporations, we are talking over £200 billion a year – that is ten times the total being taken out of

We have

- ☐ No money for the disabled
- ☐ No money for the unemployed
- ☐ No money for the NHS
- ☒ £8 million for a funeral

It's called austerity.
Because psychopaths in power
really only care about themselves.

the UK economy by austerity.

So, more than enough to pay for the bedroom tax, the abolition of Disability Living Allowance and the Social Fund...more than enough to cover all the "welfare reform" proposals and employ more, rather than fewer, public servants like nurses, care assistants, teachers etc.

Ideology

So why does Cameron continue with his disastrous policies?

It's for the same reason that there's near unanimity at Stormont that "we" in the North would benefit from reducing Corporation Tax – it's ideological, it's about putting profit before people.

Welfare reform shows clearly what Cameron – and Stormont's

– priorities are. Push down the living standards of two thirds of the population by cutting tax credits, disability allowances and all out-of-work benefits because "we must".

But cut corporation tax for large companies which will mean even less money available for the NHS and other public services.

When the Welfare Reform Bill comes back on Stormont's business agenda, we will hear a lot about the importance of "maintaining parity" and the high cost of "breaking with parity".

Breaking with parity on Corporation Tax would cost Stormont £400 - £700 million a year according to the Treasury.

Breaking parity on the Bedroom Tax would cost £17million a year;

breaking parity on "ESA in Youth", a benefit for severely disabled school-leavers, would cost less than £400,000 a year; keeping the current support for paying rates for disabled people would cost less than £2 million a year.

Some moves that would break parity would cost nothing, for example refusing to bring in "sanctions" that will see people who leave their jobs voluntarily or are sacked for misconduct facing up to three years without dole.

The amount of money being lost in tax avoidance is yet another reason to protest when the G8 comes to Ireland.

See inside for details of the Belfast Counter Summit and for buses from Belfast, Derry and Dublin.



I will work tirelessly for a tiny minority of already-rich people

LYING TORY SHIT

(but if you're poor I love you until May 7th)

See Inside

Page 3:



How the corporations work to divide and rule us

Page 5:



Details of the Belfast Counter Summit

GET THE BUS TO FERMANAGH ON MONDAY 17 JUNE

DUBLIN: 1.30pm from Liberty Hall

BELFAST: 1.30 pm from City Hall (returning same evening)

DERRY: 12.30 from Foyle street phone Connor on 07542704895 for more details.